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Freedom

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*“The first casualty
when war comes is
the truth.”*

Hiram Johnson to the
United States Senate, 1917

FIRST CASUALTY — THE TRUTH

As from midnight 16th January oil has been replaced by 'ideology', 'war aims', so far as the media, the politicians, the church hierarchy are concerned — and the States involved in a confrontation which no one can tell how it will end — least of all the public which is already being fed censored 'news' of the war as well, virtually eliminating any reference to the demonstrations worldwide against the American adventure.

When the Iraqis invaded Kuwait

Freedom described it as a good old fashioned war for territory and riches (more oil). When the United States started pouring in their armour at the 'invitation' of Saudi Arabia there was no question that this was the beginning of a crusade — other than to safeguard American oil interests. And the Yankees' British poodle could not feel left out of the photo-calls and interviews on the box, and at £2 million a day* (which could be ill-afforded for the Health Service, or

for the homeless) it was considered a bargain. After all it only meant transferring the army of the Rhine, which had been kicking its heels without a war in prospect against the Russians for the past forty years, and giving them an opportunity to fire a few rounds not against a cardboard 'enemy' but against real people — but of the lesser breed. The new-born Thatcher took time off from her house-hunting and other self-promotional activities to attend the Commons debate following the launching of the first token 18,000 tons of bombs on Iraq, to welcome the massacre. She said:

"Dictators like Saddam Hussein do not surrender. They have to be well and truly defeated. One is relieved when the battle actually starts because the tensions that build up before are very, very disturbing."

How she must have felt frustrated by her successor saying that having taken the political decision (meaning saying 'yes' when Bush phoned him to say he was free to say 'yes' or 'yes') he left it to the military to get on with the killing. Our ex-Boadicea would surely have been in the Gulf directing operations as Churchill and Hitler tried to do, with disastrous results.

All the other allies, apart from the French whose arms industry has reaped large profits from the Middle East, were very loathe to get involved except to support the idea of sanctions, and hope that the price of oil would not escalate since unlike Britain and the US they depend 100% on oil imports.

Now all has changed. With the first 18,000 tons of bombs discharged, we are told, only on military targets in Iraq and including Baghdad, Saddam Hussein not only declares that he has not *invaded* Kuwait but *liberated* it — and seeks historic arguments to show that Kuwait is a province of Iraq. Why not? He only goes back a few decades. The Zionist-Israelis justify their nation state and the occupied territories on the grounds that their ancestors were

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You have been warned! IDs and fingerprinting for all

We have not yet seen a copy of the *First Report of the Home Affairs Committee 1990* (HMSO) but a short report in *The Guardian* on some of the proposals is worth quoting now. Obviously these Committees are dominated by Conservatives and one must assume that it is not a unanimous report.

The recommendation is for "genetic fingerprinting of the male population and voluntary identity cards carrying machine-readable data". The Committee also "urged the Home Office to consider giving each citizen an identification number which could be used for poll tax and electoral registers, social security, the health service, vehicle licensing and credit agencies". That will certainly simplify life for the bureaucrats, the money lenders and the tax collector! But what about us poor simpletons?

It is also a money-maker for the pushers of false identification cards. The only time in recent history — the last war — when identity cards and ration books were issued in this country there was no problem for those who could afford to pay to get extra ration books and false ID's.

The reaction of The Association of Chief Police Officers was not the same as ours. They said it wouldn't work unless it was made compulsory! The

Committee was all in favour of a database of DNA profiles of all men, in spite of the expense, "because it would provide considerable benefits for the police". *The Guardian* summary follows this with the chairman's comment that it could "prevent innocent people falling under suspicion of serious crimes". That's hardly helping the police who surely have shown in recent years that they are real Thatcherites wanting to demonstrate that their operations are cost effective: more convictions per policeman. It doesn't matter if the victims are innocent or not, as we have seen in the press almost daily.

There was opposition to the Committee's Conservative Chairman Sir John Wheeler who, naturally, maintained that the proposals "posed no threat to civil liberties". All that the Chairman of the NCCL (Civil Liberties Council) is reported as saying was that the "proposals were open to abuse". That is perhaps the understatement of the year! *Freedom* readers who, like the writer of this piece, are members of the NCCL should protest to the Council.

We shall return to the subject in more detail when we have seen the actual report.

THE DAILY EXCESS GOES TO WAR!

We are reproducing the opening paragraphs of a whole page article with the main heading 'Lest we Forget' with the sub heading 'The real reasons why we're heading for war', and have added our own footnotes in reply — Editors.



ON the verge of one nightmare, let us reflect on another. For even greater than the perils of going to war against Saddam Hussein are the perils of letting him get away with his conquest of Kuwait.

The world now is where it was in the Thirties when Hitler took his first bite and found only words ranged against his stormtroopers. He was thus encouraged to march on until millions lay dead.

He would arguably not have been defeated but for the willingness of the United States to put its might against him and for freedom.

And yet now the voices of appeasement and pacifism (how strange to see the Labour left once more wanting us to bend the knee to a brutal, Fascistic tyrant) demonstrate that they have forgotten everything and learned nothing.

Imagine, and it does not take too much imagining, what would happen if America got fed up with the contempt shown for its willingness to play the role of the world's policeman and retreated into isolationism.

From *The Daily Express* 'Opinion', 16th January 1991

[1] Hitler came to power as a result of World War One and the Versailles Treaty that followed. The Middle East is an artificial creation by the victorious allies of 1918 and in 1945 to satisfy their economic interests: OIL. The State of Israel is the United States fifth column financed and armed with the latest weaponry including nuclear weapons.

[2] The United States has never been keen on participating in Europe's wars. They joined World War One in 1917 and World War Two only when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour which of course had nothing to do with the war in Europe which as history will surely one day record was 'won' by the Russians and their twenty million victims. In a recent issue of *Freedom* (15th December 1990) we referred to a Movitone News of 1940 shown on Channel 4 with President

Roosevelt addressing cheering thousands of Americans when he declared that not a single American life would be sacrificed for the war in Europe.

[3] A case surely of the kettle calling the pot black. We challenge *The Daily Express* to quote any Labour 'leftist' preaching appeasement to the European dictators. Their opposition didn't call for revolution or assassination but compared with the friends of *The Daily Express*' proprietor at the time, Lord Beaverbrook, they were good anti-fascists. After all it is notorious that Churchill at one time was an admirer of Mussolini and Hitler, and said so in newspaper articles and interviews.

[4] "The world's policemen" is supposed to be the United Nations Organisation and not the United States of America though in reality it has been right from its inception. The US has applied the veto

whenever a proposal by the Assembly has not suited American capitalist and political interests time after time.

What benefit has American intervention had in Latin America where it has supported brutal military dictatorships and financed right-wing 'Contras' where small countries were trying to shake off Yankee economic domination? And what has the Panama invasion produced, apart from several thousand Panamanians killed, and according to *Time* more than \$1,000 million in damage to property? The drug trafficking continues unabated and Noriega has not been brought to trial for fear he may spill the beans about the President of the USA who as CIA director was responsible for planting Noriega on the people of Panama. And what about Vietnam and Korea? American interference has left a trail of disaster, more deaths, more poverty.

[1]

[2]

[3]

[4]



Fellow travellers, 1927

From *Forward* (Glasgow) 1927

First Casualty: the Truth

(continued from page 1)

there 2,000 years ago! Which of course allows Saddam Hussein also to present himself as the champion of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Hence the missiles on Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Meanwhile, the Americans have become the protectors of small, weak nations, and defenders of international law both of which they have over the years disregarded with impunity. Even a public with a short memory surely has not already forgotten 'Operation Just Cause', as the Panama invasion was called, which cost the lives of at least 4,000 Panamanians.

Likewise with the media, the parliamentary opposition, the clergy and other pillars of the establishment. Now that we are at war 'we must present a united front to the enemy'. It's the typical English attitude of 'if you can't beat them, join them'. As was to be expected the Labour front bench, with one or two honourable exceptions (who have retired to the back benches) don't want to be in the political wilderness and have joined the flag-waving brigade. And the media, all twenty-one nationals, are now on a war footing which means that all the optimistic handouts will be retailed daily and all opposition to this barbaric confrontation — beside which the Russian confrontation with the Baltic States is insignificant — will be ignored. This is already happening and it will be

the task of minority papers such as *Freedom* with an anti-war record going back to the 1914-18 massacre, to report on the opposition worldwide to yet another war which as we have said before, but cannot repeat often enough, will create more problems than it solves, as well as costing untold numbers of human lives and material destruction beyond belief.

We are living in a world bordering on insanity. The third world pollutes our planet because they cannot afford not to; the rich minority pollute it even more because of their greed. The war in the Middle East is yet another nail in the coffin of our environment which affects us all. The planet will survive all the pollution. We are concerned about human survival which won't if we go on as we are doing. We therefore appeal to those of our fellow citizens who can still think for themselves, not as slaves of the computer, or the mass media, but as human beings who can transcend the narrow confines of nationalism, religion, race, family, authority, power, success and wealth, to come together internationally to breathe sanity into this mad, mad world of ours.

Freedom Press

* It is now admitted that before a shot was fired, the cost to British taxpayers is £500 million — double the original estimates.

A STATEMENT BY ANARCHISTS IN LONDON

Anarchists support all of the victims of power politics and the multinationals. All attempts to stop the war must continue.

We view with horror the cold-blooded escalation of violence which may threaten the lives and livelihoods of people all over the world, not to mention the possible ecological disaster.

We emphasise our solidarity with innocent refugees in this country who may be threatened with internment.

News before it happens

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Chemical attack is launched on Israel

Not even the Israeli Government said so!

TRUST THE BISHOPS TO BLESS THE GUNS

In the debate in the House of Lords on the Gulf crisis the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, told their lordships that in November he had said he would prefer a year of sanctions to even the shortest war, and sanctions had indeed been "an astonishing success". But together with all the bishops of the Church of England, who met yesterday, he reluctantly accepted that it might be necessary to go to war in the interests of justice and long-term peace.

"I firmly believe that sanctions must be maintained and that we must continue to support every diplomatic channel that has any reasonable chance of success, but we cannot avoid the fact that it may be necessary to resort to war in the interests of peace in the long term."

P.S. Needless to say Saddam Hussein has already declared that God is on his side, just as all the other politicians will be doing, hands on hearts and looking up to heaven for inspiration.



GOD IS ON OUR SIDE

John Olday in *The March to Death* (Freedom Press, 1943)

THE GREAT POLL TAX REVOLT

its relation to the Gulf war, legal and local news

The relation of the poll tax to the Gulf war is an interesting and complex one. In the light of the obvious wish of the Tories and the ruling class generally to continue to profit from cheap oil from the Middle East, it seems naive to argue that once again a war has been started merely to divert attention from domestic problems. After all, even though some of the opinion polls claim that a majority of people support military action (a euphemism for 'war'), how can pictures on television news really overshadow the daily stress created by the present recession, increasing unemployment, high interest rates for mortgage payers, inflation and the threat of increased poll tax bills?

But we now gather that abolition of poll tax is "not an issue" for the government; when questioned recently, Prime Minister John Major replied that he didn't think Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine would even suggest abolition. Contrast this with the November leadership election when all three candidates, recognising that the poll tax was the key factor in Thatcher's unpopularity, implied that it would be got rid of. Are they again hoping that the British public will get used to the idea?

Evidence continues to suggest that the cost of collecting the poll tax is massive. A recent Audit Commission report (cited in *Local Government Information Unit Poll Tax Focus*, November 1990) claims that collecting the poll tax will cost up to £471 million more than the rates! This figure doesn't include the huge amount that will not be coming in due to non-payment, of course. But the report goes on: "The amount of court time currently available for recovery action is substantially less than local authorities need to pursue defaulters successfully". In other words, they can't win!

Dropping the idea of poll tax is not simply about pride, of course. The ideological principle is the most important thing to the Tories. It doesn't matter about the cost, it seems, as long as individuals are taxed and not property.

But what will be the direct economic effect of a Gulf war on the poll tax? Some of the newspapers have claimed that it will mean that Heseltine will not be able to chuck as much money at the beast as he had hoped. The government weren't keen on 'throwing good money after bad' anyway though,

so I doubt whether Heseltine's original plans would have eased the pain of the poll tax to a significant degree.

Despite the newspaper reports, a Tory MP I heard on the radio recently said that a Gulf war would not affect domestic economic policies much, since a special fund has been put by for just such exigencies. How reassuring!

Meanwhile, it is some indication of just how successful the non-payment campaign has been that friends of the Tories (ideologically speaking at least) have failed to cash in on everyone else's suffering as they had hoped. At the end of last year, two companies who provided services for poll tax collection ceased trading! One of them, Banking Automation, which provided cash receipting tills to collect poll tax suddenly withdrew its service at the beginning of November, blaming disappointing collection rates!

Those activists who read the 'quality' dailies will know by now about the recent High Court ruling on McKenzie's friends. For those who haven't heard, the situation is as follows. A good deal of the success had by non-payers in wasting court time has been through use of McKenzie's Friends who have sat with them, giving them questions to ask the prosecuting counsel and so on. In many cases recently, exasperated magistrates have banned the use of these Friends. Liberty (formerly the National

Council for Civil Liberties) backed a High Court test case in an attempt to demonstrate that McKenzie's Friends are a legal right. However, the High Court ruled against this interpretation of the law, one reason being that legally informed members of the public might be "politically motivated".

Well of course we are! But 'impartial' magistrates operate a partial law, so what's the difference? Nothing is really neutral; life is politics, after all.

What the ruling means is that use of McKenzie's friends is now only discretionary; activists would still do well to offer their services to non-payers who, in turn, should certainly still request the use of a Friend. At the time of writing (15th January), however, an appeal against the decision is pending. Look out for further details.

Even if the courts succeed totally in issuing everyone with liability orders, this is no great setback. Court action is only one small part of the general campaign, perhaps the most important component of which is mass action to prevent wage

arrestments and seizures of goods by bailiffs. In many estates, councils simply cannot and dare not send in bailiffs. But even in small villages, people are organising with great success. *3D* reports the case of Bishops Lydeard, near Taunton, where the villagers sealed off all the roads to prevent the bailiffs entering! (For copies of *3D* write, with a donation, to 116 The Avenue, Tottenham, London N17 6DG.)

The first attempt to seize goods in the Brighton area happened last week (7th January) in a quiet street in Hove. For any anti-bailiff action, it is necessary to have a telephone tree. I heard about the bailiffs through my local APTU the evening before they were expected. I phoned others who in turn phoned still others. In the event, up to twenty people were outside the targeted house on and off throughout the day. The picket began at 8am. The bailiffs approached at 9.30am in a blue transit van. On seeing the crowd, the placards and the Sussex Federation banner, they sped off without even stopping their van! The picket continued all day and we were frozen by the end of it. A final piece of advice for any would-be bailiff busters, then, is to wear plenty of warm clothing on the picket line. Apart from that, just do the usual things: give the picket maximum publicity — contact the local papers, TV and radio, leaflet, etc; let everyone know that people are willing to defend them against the bailiffs.

Johnny Yen

There is still time to take advantage of our Annual Book Sale

The drug racket

So justice has been done again. Nineteen year old Karen Smith has begun a 25 year prison sentence in Thailand for smuggling heroin. Her only hope now is a royal pardon, but the authorities say she was lucky not to be hanged.

The criminals caught, law and order prevails again! Somehow it seems unlikely.

Karen Smith is one of many people who become involved in the drugs trade and ultimately are the victims of those who control it, and society.

As usual it was two teenagers (Patricia Cahill, the other, is still awaiting trial in a juvenile court) who fell foul of the law. It is quite obvious that they didn't put up the money — an estimated £2-4 million (depending on which paper you read). Whoever did pay for it has not been brought to trial. Accusations are rife that no effort was made to apprehend them. Surprising? Not really. Those behind the deal must be wealthy. With that wealth comes power. A case of the ruling classes looking after their own?

Anarchists will question what right a judge has to deny a teenager her freedom. Is he in any way superior to her? Of course not. He is human and is subject to human failings like anyone else. Is he an expert on drugs? It is doubtful if he could spot an addict in an opium den. Alternatively, he may well use drugs himself. Hypocrisy is a common failing in the judiciary!

We may also ask who made the differentiation between the likes of cocaine or cannabis, and alcohol or tobacco. Let's face it, the tobacco barons prey on children in a far more exploitative manner than almost anyone else. The illegal drugs pale into insignificance when compared with the numbers of people addicted to, and who die of tobacco or alcohol.

And what of prescription drugs? Millions of people in Britain are addicted to tranquillisers. And people die every year of medical drugs which turn out to be dangerous.

The penalties the pushers of tobacco, alcohol and prescription drugs receive are knighthoods, huge profits and lives of luxury.

Deaths directly due to heroin tend to be because of purer samples causing an overdose. Drugs tend to get mixed more and more as they pass through

different hands to increase profitability. Decriminalisation would prevent this from occurring. It would also prevent deaths from sharing needles and would make counselling those who wanted to kick their addiction easier.

Decriminalisation would destroy the profits of the market and the drug barons would soon lose interest in a commodity without profit, leaving those who wish to use them to control their own supply.

The leading anti-drugs crusaders like George Bush were quite happy to trade drugs for weapons with the Contras and the Mujahideen. They also came in handy in Vietnam to stop the troops questioning too deeply what they were doing (a policy repeated by the Soviets in Afghanistan).

The ruling classes have consistently used drugs to their own benefit (quite literally at times!). They were only illegalised when it became politically useful to do so. Through manipulating information, drugs have been used as a scapegoat for just about every social problem. They have also used it to justify raids on housing estates, arresting political activists and military intervention in foreign states.

The very social evils which are blamed on drugs are more likely contributory factors for people starting to use drugs of any description.

Another reality is that for many Third World farmers growing the likes of coca, opium and hashish is the only way of surviving. Much of their land is cash-cropped leaving the peasant farmers with very little to live off. To rectify this injustice the US government is funding the burning of their crops, their only means of survival.

For anarchists, drugs prove once again the failure of law and order. Ultimately people have the right to choose whether they take any form of stimulant or not. If there are negative effects of use, then research should prove this. People should be informed of any risks, and help provided for those who want to stop, but can't. We should continue to expose government manipulation, hypocrisy and lies regarding drugs. It is important to support those who become the victims of the drug trade. Addicts of both legal and illegal drugs need our support, as do those like Karen Smith. They, locked in prison are the political victims.

Andrew McGingle

Thoughts on science, law, hostages, war and terrorism

In the 1940s, part of the practical work for a chemistry degree was the identification of simple mixtures of compounds. The tests available then were usually not specific for single compounds but indicated the presence of atomic groups in the molecules. Such training was useful for developing systematic working methods and some sense of the reliability or otherwise of the results. At the time I also worked in a food analysis laboratory where more sophisticated methods were used.

Later, I became involved in the development of chromatographic methods which revolutionised analysis by a preliminary physical separation of the compounds in a

sample. The use of other physical methods enables even the highly complex mixtures of closely related compounds found in living systems to be analysed with reasonable accuracy.

Not being a founder member of our establishment, I continued to pursue a research career mainly outside England with its insular structure, even in scientific matters. This has made me well qualified to make the comments which follow.

When I read an account of how a Dr Skuse had claimed to have shown that some Irish suspects had handled nitroglycerine, I was surprised. It was back to the 1940s and earlier! The test described is suitable only to give a preliminary indication as several commonly occurring compounds also react. Many factors, such as greasy hands, would affect the result.

This forensic evidence and other awful aspects of the case of the Birmingham six have been thoroughly investigated by Chris Mullin who must be warmly congratulated for his persistence and courage. His book *Error of Judgement* gives much detailed information. As noted therein, nitrocellulose as well as nitroglycerine would give a reaction and is used widely as a protective coating on many frequently handled objects. This was almost certainly the source of the positive result in the preliminary tests. Skuse should have known that since both compounds contain nitro groups and glycerol is so similar in structure to the sugars in cellulose, that error was possible.

The details given by Mullin indicate that Skuse was incompetent, or worse, in his scientific work. Unfortunately, the Home Office did not discover this until several victims had long been in prison. At the trial, Skuse stated that his tests made him 99% certain that two of the suspects had handled explosives. A reasonable view is that from the preliminary tests, there was one chance in a thousand that this was true. Even this was reduced to zero by the more reliable tests made.

Despite this, Skuse managed to hoodwink the jury, with considerable help from Judge Bridge, who went out of his way to denigrate the perfectly sound scientific evidence of Dr Hugh Black. As documented by Chris Mullin,

(continued on page 4)

The Wealth of Thatcherism

A recent news report on BBC Radio One highlighted an important achievement of the Thatcher Government which *Freedom's* recent appreciation failed to acknowledge.

The 'Thatcher era' saw a 200% increase in consumer spending on leisure goods between 1979 and 1990. The development of the leisure industry was a particularly impressive achievement since, in the same period, the average time available for leisure did not increase at all.

The 'economic miracle' of the late 1980s, much celebrated by Thatcher and the right wing media, gave many workers a degree of affluence which allowed them to spend money on video machines, stereo equipment and jogging suits. There was, unfortunately, no accompanying miracle which modified capitalism to allow them more time to watch, listen or run.

The privilege of being able to enjoy these expensive toys was still reserved for those few members of the community who were not obliged to work for 40 hours every week to pay for them.

I can think of no better response to this phenomenon than to repeat the oft-quoted aphorism from Ivan Illich's *De-Schooling Society*: "Man must choose whether to be rich in things or in the freedom to use them".

AH

Letter from America

(from an Englishman in Wyoming)

As an Englishman living in Wyoming, anti-war resistance to the Gulf crisis seems excruciatingly slow. The state of Wyoming is geographically vast, and its population tiny — 500,000. The small scale of population lends itself to face to face relationships, and the possibilities of decentralisation. There was a recent anti-war turnout of several hundred people in Laramie, the small city where the University of Wyoming is located. After Britain the climate on demonstrations is remarkably cautious and conservative. Just as in Britain it was common to meet someone with left-wing views, here it is uncommon, republicanism is the mainstay of political philosophy. On a recent anti-Gulf action, it was insisted that there be no slogans, placards, etc. — somehow the belief was that to demand a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis can itself be non-political! There is little understanding that 'political' may mean the self-activity of people stopping the war games of the corporate State, political is seen as meaning party political. There was a sensitivity towards chanting slogans and which amounted to an obsessional concern not

to be seen as being anti-military, and thus anti-government or state. The inculcation of obedience to flag and nation is deeply ingrained in this society, the identification with the State as being 'them' is disturbing.

However young Americans are increasingly aware that their lives may be lost in the desert, over the price of oil, and corporate America's empire. The cheap emotional rhetoric to which they are exposed, day and night, is being laid bare, as personal survival becomes the issue. I spoke to a group of several at a local anti-war vigil. It seems that the military is not getting its quota of corporate cannon fodder and the draft (call up) may be introduced at any time. The young people I spoke to were determined not to co-operate with the war machine, there is an increasing politicisation, and linking of state power, capitalism and authoritarianism embodied in the military, as a major instrument of repression and control. Wyoming of course is not typical of urban America, being rural, the major economic base, coal mining, ranching and tourism. There is a strong morality structure of republicanism and religious fundamentalism (god help us!). However this experience indicated that seeds of resistance are growing amongst the young. Veterans from the Vietnam war are increasingly speaking out against the Gulf crisis, trying to demystify the young whose sense of justice and 'patriotism' is once again being betrayed and misplaced as the propaganda machine attempts to take them down the slaughter trail. What comes over so strongly in this situation is the foregone conclusion that war is an 'inevitability', that 'aggression will be rewarded', that Saddam is

'worst than Hitler' ... the disgusting corny jingoism of the State never seems to date.

I am now writing a regular column for the statewide newspaper *The Caspar Star Tribune*. It has a liberal policy which here means that radical views and ideas are freely aired, unlike Britain where the national and regional newspapers have their consciousness right up the establishment. Some themes reinforced the powerlessness of the people, vividly depicted when state, class and capital consolidates its power through imperialism. This is allied to the need for decentralisation of power, in all areas of life. The build up to war has demanded that people look at the society which produces it, how may institutions be changed or overthrown? This makes a lot of sense to both republicans, liberals and democrats whose assorted political labels become increasingly meaningless as the war clouds gather. Their sacrosanct belief in self-determination is meaningless as the corporate state demands sacrifice of their young, and a glossy totalitarianism mocks the 'democratic process'.

It is also becoming clear that obedience to the command to kill is a root cause of war, not 'aggression' which, like America's 'war on drugs', is another hysterical diversion away from the increasing menace of a corporate economy and centralised state.

A reality in the US which was predicted with some accuracy by Marcuse in *One Dimensional Man* was that of the administration of consciousness by the corporate state. The individual is conditioned to conform to the consciousness of the

obedient worker consumer. Deviance to this conscription of consciousness is defined as sickness, pathology or criminalised. Much of this conditioning would appear to be breaking down under the increasing impact of economic recession and build-up of war in the Persian Gulf. The polarisation between the person in the street and corporate America reveals that the domestic enemy in permanent occupation is the corporate economy and the centralised state, and that the lives of thousands are deemed worthless when power and control are at stake.

The mass identification with state/economy and government is breaking down due to the realisation that another generation might be sacrificed for the almighty dollar — which is getting increasingly scarce and worthless for both blue and white collar workers in Main Street USA.

Each state in the US is like a separate country, geographical distance is vast after Europe. The plains and mountains of Wyoming are a breath of fresh air after the cynicism and helplessness and hopelessness of Thatcher's Britain. The political stance in Wyoming tends to a 'frontier' conservatism and suspicion of all political promises. The bottom line is what puts food on the table. Hopefully this rugged, frontier independence that promoted the ethnocide of the native American Indians will assert its energy powerfully to withdraw support for the slaughter of its young in the Gulf. It took a decade for the Vietnam war to be shaken down by massive public unpopularity. All signs are that maybe people won't get fooled again.

Mark A. Newns

Thoughts on Science

(continued from page 3)

later work confirmed that the evidence of Dr Skuse was unsound, which did not prevent long and most devious efforts to conceal the truth.

With a few exceptions, this case reveals the press and media as lackeys of a corrupt system in which people are arrested and framed on slight suspicion in order to set an example for the rest of us and to satisfy a desire for revenge. The attitude of the judges like Lane and Denning was that everything should be done to protect the system so that mistakes are never admitted. As Denning said, if the defendants succeed it will mean that many members of two police forces and others conspired to deflect the course of justice. It is absolutely clear that this is exactly what did happen in this case.

Although these victims may now be released (at a time judged by the authorities to be good for public relations) it is clear that this was not an isolated event but a result of policy. A course in A level chemistry for judges, even if they are capable of doing it, would not prevent similar events occurring again. The season of so-called peace and goodwill has passed without the release of the men whilst judges, policemen and politicians have been over-indulging. They can only be described as hostages.

There are other hostages in Britain, such as the victims of the Broadwater Farm police. The thousands of remand prisoners who exist in deplorable conditions are also hostages about whom little is heard. In contrast, the media recently went on endlessly about hostages in Iraq whose situation, although undesirable, was not desperate.

As part of an Empire, English governments have maintained a divided Ireland for several hundred years. There is no evidence that they are competent to do so. It is now said that there is a moral duty to enter a bloody war as lackeys of the present rulers of the United States. These people wish to take over the mantle of imperialism, obtain cheap oil and lots of money from arms. Wars are the height of terrorism, many innocent people are killed at random and immense damage is done. At least terrorists sometimes target persons responsible for bad decisions. The reason for this war is that after a previous war the 'victors' divided up Arabia without reference to the inhabitants. Another war will only repeat the cycle.

Norman

'Voting better than sex'

Public Service Broadcasting in the USA does not carry commercial or party-political advertising. But it does carry official government advertisements. Before the mid-term elections, last November, there was a campaign urging people to vote. No matter which party, so long as you vote for the system.

One advertisement featured the singer-comedienne Madonna, dressed in underwear and a stars-and-stripes flag. Madonna assured viewers that voting was "even better than sex".

The success of the advertisement is not known. The turn-out of voters was even less than usual, but without Madonna it might have been even less than that.

Environmental gobbledegook

Representatives of multinationals met in London recently for a conference on 'The A to Z of Corporate Responsibility and Environmental Excellence'.

Exxon, whose tanker the Exxon Valdez was responsible for the catastrophic Alaskan oil spill, spoke on 'Fast and effective management response to an environmental crisis'.

Union Carbide, whose factory caused the Bhopal disaster, were scheduled to speak on 'Building and ensuring continued environmental credibility', but withdrew before the meeting.

The title of British Nuclear Fuels contribution best explains what the conference was really about. They spoke on 'The PR challenge'.

News from Northern Ireland

At this time of year circumstances in Northern Ireland lead to the production of a rash of articles in magazines with notions about the best way to arrive at a solution to our problems. In some senses this article is just the same as all the rest, but in the most important sense of all it is totally different ... there is no prescription of the solution, just some description of some of the elements in a future that would make sense.

Over Christmas, the IRA announced a three day ceasefire. Given that there is rarely any offensive action in those three days anyway the announcement of the halt served mainly to indicate how much in the driving seat the IRA is, when it comes to setting and changing the political agenda. This indicates, in no uncertain terms, the utter failure of politics as the citizens in Northern Ireland experience it and also underlines the reality that initiatives by Brookes or any other Secretary of State are doomed to failure for the foreseeable future.

As anarchists concerned with the situation in Ireland we will know that the actions of elite guerrilla armies, often perceived as openly sectarian, and the fumbings of politicians will not change one jot the situation here in meaningful terms. But both in the short term and in the long term what changes are possible and what changes are necessary to see peace and justice break out?

These thoughts occupied the minds of the participants of a 'political options' workshop I co-led with a friend just before Christmas. None of the participants were anarchists, though all are community activists or members of voluntary organisations. Various elements in the peace-filled future were raised and a sketchy blueprint emerged ...

Sinn fein would have to be involved in talks at some early stage, but this would have to be tied to a long-term ceasefire by the IRA. An amnesty of political prisoners from both sides would be organised. The Army would be

withdrawn to barracks. A clear statement from the republican movement would be needed on the reality of the one million British people in Ireland and how they would fit into the new Ireland. Disarming the protestants who have hoarded guns since B-special days would have to occur. And the whole issue of Britishness/Irishness would have to be raised.

... a very sketchy blueprint indeed! And one that has plenty of holes in it and that includes tasks that it would be well-nigh impossible to bring off. How would monitoring of all this be done, for one thing?

Nonetheless, there is plenty there for us to be going on with. For anarchists who believe that the revolution is happening now, in more or less favourable times, we will want to identify those trends and possibilities that it makes sense to promote and to assist as they lead to freedom and peace. We can't just sit around waiting for 'the Irish question' to get sorted out, so that we can then get on with making the new Ireland into an anarchist wonderland. The politics of the Green and Orange are too strong and real to be ignored even though the problems they face us with are huge. (Joke: "I know you said you were an anarchist, but are you a catholic anarchist or a protestant anarchist?")

I had a letter from a comrade in Bristol before Christmas asking for material on the war in Ireland and it got me thinking that while there have been over a dozen 'News from Northern Ireland' pieces in the past year, there has been no real comment or debate. So I offer you a New Year's Resolution ... get your pens out and get tore into the question of Ireland this year. It must be one of the biggest questions facing British (and Irish!) anarchists and all our thoughts have worth at this point. And our comrade in Bristol will certainly be interested. As I will!

Ath-bhliain fé mhaise dhíobh uilig!
Happy New Year to you all!

Dave Duggan

When "It was the good ship Venus / By God you should have seen us" became part of Britain's subterranean folk culture as a brilliant penning of honest to God filth elevated to an art form at its finest, numerous established and ageing academic poets fought their way out of their closets to claim that they were its only begetter and they ranged from Betjeman to Auden and higher and lower. Pornography, no matter how witty or well crafted, can only be accepted by the puritanical self-appointed police persons who plague our lives if it is part of literature's long deceased grave fodder. These are the people who foul the whole spectrum of politics of the Left and the Right, mean minded neurotics who censor the readings within the schools, the public reading rooms, the libraries, yea even to the humble bawdy seaside comic postcards and if bereft of authority call upon the State's law enforcing police to close the bookshops or scare the wits out of some frightened newspaper shop by stripping the magazine shelves in the company of the law. And let there be no mistake about these ghastly people for those who bleep of their love for libertarianism fear their power. They are Cromwell's puritans who closed the theatres and smashed the stained glass windows within the churches who as catholic, protestant or non-believers carried their desire for conformity and censorship across the seas to destroy ancient societies and they lived on in the Victorian Watch Committees scribbling down the bawdy joke within the music hall to hound the performer into the magistrate's court for the five pound fine, yea even into 1991 they ride the escalators of London's Underground seeking out the brassiere advertisements to cry 'out, out foul spirit' at and call a copper. It is a world where wit and humour is a crime, for wit and humour always carry a sense of guilt in the listener. It was for this that Oscar picked oakum in Reading gaol. The definitive life and work of Donald

HUMOUR UNDER H

The World of Donald McGill by Elfreda Buckland (Blandford Press)
Nowhere in America by Hal Rammel (University of Illinois Press)

McGill must be Elfreda Buckland's large book in that it gives all the academic facts of McGill's life and an extraordinarily large number of reproductions of his early and late work. A brilliant draftsman and a magnificent colourist he captured in colour the society of his day and they smiled and made their bawdy jokes and around the coast the mean-minded puritans in or out of elected office, with or without God, hauled him, the newsagents and the publishers into court. McGill kicked off this mortal coil in 1962 and his work is now art collectors biddings with prices of £1,900. I wished that I could have afforded a McGill original. Orwell as the voice of authoritarian common sense believed in censorship but inevitably only on his own terms as when he wrote that Dali's *Life* should be published as it was your actual work of art though mucky, but that he, Orwell, would only censor dirty Port Said style postcards and of McGill's work Orwell wrote that it was "full of heavy lines and empty spaces" — "deliberately ugly in hideous colours". The Tory right-wing long ago took Orwell as their own but I will stay with McGill's cards for the common people and honest vulgarity with the fish and chips. Of Rammel's *Nowhere in America* it is written that it was sparked off by the discovery of Red Ingle's 'Nowhere' in an old record store on the south-west side of Chicago some years ago. I can but quote T-Bone Slim of the IWW who defined humour as "the carefree manhandling of extremes", and it is indeed a book for the permanent small personal library for it

Memoirs of a Lavatory Attendant by S.A.B. Rogers (Dennis Dobson)
Erich Ohser: Zeichnungen und Karikaturen by E.O. Plauen (Ostdeutsche Galerie Regensburg)

contains a fantastic bibliography that ranges from a seventeenth century chapbook, an English mummers play of 1899 to the Hoovervilles of the American twentieth century depression when the American people lay down in the dust and starved in a world of plenty. It is the saving grace of the common people that in war, revolution, mass starvation



Schiele versus the Impressionists: collage by Arthur Moysé

High Horse Riderless

High Horse Riderless
by L.T.C. Rolt
Green Books, £6.50

L.T.C. Rolt was an engineer by training, and one with a great love of machines, but he could see the dangers as well as the beauties of machinery. Although by no means an anarchist, he saw what was fundamentally wrong with society, and suggested ways in which each individual is responsible for trying to bring about change.

In reading it, it is difficult to believe that *High Horse Riderless* was written between 1942-44, and first published in 1947, because it deals very much with what concerns us today: ecology, and the search for some meaning to life. However, it goes further back than most doom and gloom books: Rolt traces the rot back in terms of social history to discover where things started to go wrong.

For him the ideal times were in the late sixteenth century when villages were self-governing, under the system of Frankpledge. People had the rights and liberties of self-government, as well as individual responsibility. Each member of society had his or her work to do, and knew it was valued, and so took a pride in it. He blames the Reformation for beginning the slide towards materialism.

Throughout the book he weaves from social history, to religion and church history, through aesthetics, literature and art. He shows how when people had the chance to do worthwhile work, and feel some pride in it, it influenced their whole being and way of living. He doesn't sentimentalise over 'good honest work' or 'sweat of the brow', but has a lot to say about the scourge of over-specialisation. Once people were cut off from the end product of their labours, and could only see the small bit they were working on, they ceased to feel any sense of pride or creativity in their work.

He reckons the eighteenth century Industrial

Revolution gave a great boost to the emerging class system. Machinery was the ideal weapon with which the rich could grind the poor down. No longer was production linked to need, but strictly for profit, with the search for more markets and raw materials leading to the expansion of the Empire.

His argument is that where Marxism was an improvement in that it sought to redistribute the wealth a bit more fairly, it failed in that it was still run on a totally materialistic basis.

And so the story goes on into the twentieth century. The third world countries deep in debt, exploiting their very soil to keep producing the raw materials needed to pay it off. And the destruction of surpluses simply to keep prices up. He sees also the failure of socialism, with the very employees turning capitalist — remember this was written more than 45 years ago!

The strength and power of the monopolies is frightening. Working conditions are so good there is no need to rebel so that the working force is finally enslaved without even realising it. From economic power it is a very short step to political power.

In his chapter on war he says: "A democratic government which exists to protect the interests of predatory materialism is but one perilous remove from the predatory totalitarian state ..."

Rolt's view of women is rather hard to take, not so much for the point he is making about the pride in real cooking, real food, and so on, but in the explicit expectation that only women would be involved in this. But I suppose, 45 years ago this was still true.

He has a lot to say on self-sufficiency, creative pride, and a feeling of freedom to be responsible for oneself. There is a great deal of what he says which most of us will find questionable, but beyond that, there is a lot which is still very relevant. A book to read and re-read.

Zeb Korycinska

A Kropotkin Biography

Peter Kropotkin: From Prince to Rebel
George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic
Black Rose Books, £11.50 (post free from Freedom Press)

The biography of Peter Kropotkin by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic was first published in Britain in 1950 as *The Anarchist Prince*. A reprint with a biographical supplement was published in the United States in 1971. Now another reprint with an introduction by Woodcock and an additional bibliographical supplement by Avakumovic has been published in Canada as part of the Black Rose collected edition of Kropotkin's works.

This is a well-known and well-written book, and it was valuable when it first appeared, since there was relatively little available material in English about Kropotkin or anarchism in general (though Woodcock characteristically exaggerates the situation); but it is unscholarly and unreliable, and it gives a rather sentimental account of a really rather formidable figure; and it has been considerably superseded by work done during the past forty years, and it will be even more seriously superseded by current research in both West and East.

In this edition the text hasn't been revised at all, and even the most obvious mistakes haven't been corrected. There is curious confusion about the title — Woodcock says that it has been changed to *Peter Kropotkin: A Biography*, but it appears on the cover and title page as *Peter Kropotkin: From Prince to Rebel*. Both bibliographical supplements are incomplete and inaccurate, and the new one includes some strange errors — Keitha Tompkins appears as 'Keltha Thomas' and Nicolas Walter becomes 'Norman'. Like so much of the Black Rose Kropotkin edition, this is a good read but an awful mess.

MH

and persecution there is a gallows humour and a belief that somewhere there is a Big Rock Candy Mountain that will give a materialistic salvation to their human agony but always the cynical smile for as I said to Karl Marx, "Karly, boy I'm all for it but not in our lifetime moosh".

Rammel has followed the same style of trail as those who sought out the origins of the folk ballads and songs and it is an extremely well researched work and he is to be congratulated on it for it is a worthy contribution to the Folklore and Society series yet one has always to, nay must, remember that of the ballads of America's hobo jungles it was a cry for bread in a land where the corn lay rotting. Clive Murphy in the series 'Ordinary Lives' has recorded the life of Sidney Arthur Brahma Rogers. It is a rambling narrative but none the worse for that and I eschewed its main title *Four Acres and a Donkey* for its sub title *The Memoirs of a Lavatory Attendant*. Sid, as we all mist, went to that Great Piss-hole in the sky on the 2nd October 1971 but here is his life as told to the author. When a subject matter is allowed to ramble on I find that too much of little worth is talked of and things claimed are never challenged. In all honesty I found that Sid's life in his telling contained little of importance and I would hold that the fault, if it is a fault, lies with Murphy and Rogers for there must have been much to tell of worth. Of Chicago Sid writes that he saw Jack 'Legs' Diamond come out of a theatre with a lady in red and as the lady moved away the police gunned down Diamond. I think that the correct story is that 'Legs' was a Chicago newspaper stringer who acted as bag man for the criminal controllers of Chicago and he was gunned down in a subway by an unknown gun who has never been named while the man with the 'lady in red' was the bank robber Dillinger who was betrayed by the lady for a promise, never honoured, that she would get American citizenship and Dillinger was gunned down by FBI agents coming out of a cinema showing a Clark Gable film. Sid writes that Al Capone was arrested driving a beer truck and sent to Alcatraz where he was stabbed to death by another prisoner.

Nay, Sid, Al did not drive beer trucks for he ruled the entire corrupt crime syndicate of Chicago and he owned the courts and the police and it was the tax collectors who finally got Al behind bars. Al died of syphilis in Alcatraz and forgive me if I become the pedantic academic Sid. We all fantasise for it is our daytime dreaming and it harms no one. Many an East End family will tell you that Jack the Ripper hid under their great grandmother's bed or that their aunt saw the face of Jesus in a stain on their lavatory ceiling and why challenge it? And where is that huge bearded man who drove around Soho in an old limousine with buffalo horns fixed to the radiator who wrote that "he carried a gun for Capone" until the London police wanted to know if he really had and it was fantasy friends no more, so too with much of what Sid has written. But the story he should have gone with was when he worked in the Piccadilly lavatory chasing out the 'queers' and one felt the bloodstained junkies' drug needles crushing under your feet as you stood and pissed. Sid, that was your story and you let it slip by you mate.

Of E.O. Plauen's book of cartoons and drawings, they appear to contain all the anger and bitterness that one associates with German art between the wars. One can say that the brutality of the political targets are not there but though well drawn they for me seem to contain that feeling of pain and hopelessness so ring up the curtain and bring on McGill.

Arthur Moysé

There is still time to
take advantage of our
Annual Book Sale



Notes on World War Three

Following the interest expressed in my article 'The Fall Guy' (*Freedom* 1st December 1990), additional research has turned up more complete information on the alleged letter passed by the Iraqis to the UN. An account in *The Guardian* (31st October 1990) refers to an 'undated' internal document market 'Top Secret and Private' addressed to the Kuwaiti Minister of the Interior from their State Security Department about a meeting it had with the CIA's Director at its Virginia HQ in November 1989. Unlike Alistair Cooke's BBC report, the newspaper fails to mention the inclusion in the letter of William Webster's personal telephone number.

It is this document that the Iraqi Foreign Minister said proves "a plot against Iraq's national security, territorial integrity and national economy". There is another brief reference to it in *The Guardian* on 8th November 1990, buried in another article, which confusingly says it "dates from October 1989" (impossible, if the meeting was in November). I can find no further mention of the letter in the national press. The CIA described it as "a total fabrication". Well, they would, wouldn't they.

On the subject of US knowledge and encouragement of an invasion, the same newspaper notes (20th September 1990) that throughout July, as tension rose on the Kuwait-Iraq border John Kelly, the US Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, and other administration officials lobbied Congress *not* to impose sanctions against Iraq, still an important trading partner. On 31st, Kelly repeatedly stressed to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the US had no defence treaty with Kuwait — or any other Gulf country — and thus had no obligation to go to its aid if it was attacked. (The CIA had already warned Bush that Iraq was preparing a military strike.)

After the invasion the US ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, is quoted as saying: "Obviously I didn't think, and nobody else did, that the Iraqis were going to take *all* of Kuwait" (my emphasis). According to Adel Darwish, a writer on Arab affairs, on Channel

4's 'After Dark' programme (12th January 1991) Glaspie was speaking "under instructions" when she effectively told Saddam Hussein at their notorious meeting just before the invasion that the US would do nothing if he invaded. Ever since its artificial creation by Britain, Kuwait, part of which 'belonged' to the Hashemite kingdom has had to bribe Iraq not to re-conquer it. But it seems that some amongst the US elite, still terrified of a westward expansion of Islamic fundamentalism saw Western support for militarily strong Iraq as a way of not only stopping the Ayatollahs, but also of providing agreed protection for the rest of Kuwait if Iraq was 'allowed' to take the disputed border area and oilfields, plus the strategic islands at the head of the Gulf. This would explain Glaspie's extraordinary invitation.

As anarchists we are opposed to all nation states and all rulers, so it is not for us to support one side or another in this conflict, unlike some of the Trotskyist groups in Britain who scream that Iraq — along with its extremely democratic and socialist ruler — should be defended by any means necessary. Principally, it would seem, by blocking access to anti-war demonstrations with phalanxes of intimidating people trying to sell copies of *Socialist Worker*. The whole Middle East region is comprised of corrupt and despotic regimes of the kind the Left has often supported in its juvenile clinging to power politics, and the only way for any of their peoples to achieve true peace and freedom is by throwing off their parasitic ruling classes and erasing the artificial borders between these man-made 'nations'. This includes Israel which Tom King, the 'Defence' Secretary, described recently as "a completely sovereign country". In fact Israel, as everyone (including King) well knows is about as sovereign as the Isle of Wight, surviving only with the aid of American military and economic crutches. No solution imposed from outside the region, or from above without the consent of its peoples can last for long. The answer is in their hands.

Kevin McFaul

Rambling Notes

The Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) is one of the miscellaneous group of organisations, sometimes called quangoes, that are spawned from time to time by the government. Although given considerable independence they are expected to be dutifully obedient offspring and if they bite back they soon discover where power really lies.

The NCC was formed about 40 years ago, as a result of pressure from environmental groups, to provide the framework to protect the countryside and guide UK conservation policies. It is essentially a scientific body whose research into problems such as acid rain and industrial pollution has been well received; but it also advises the government and others on all matters which affect wild life and places and is responsible for designating, setting up and administering Sites of Special Scientific Interest, so keeping at bay some of the more mercenary development plans of industrial farmers, to the benefit of all who enjoy the countryside in their leisure time.

The NCC is now being dismembered as the result of a decision by Nicholas Ridley when Secretary of State for the Environment, who decided that it was becoming too 'subversive'. It is being broken up into separate organisations for England, Scotland and Wales with the Scottish and Welsh organisations (but not the English) being merged with their respective Countryside Commissions — agencies concerned with the recreational enjoyment of the countryside with particular responsibilities for 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty', long distance footpaths and the National Parks.

Should not this devolutionary step receive a cautious welcome for the measure of decentralisation involved, and if so why is it being frantically opposed by over twenty leading independent environmental organisations? Well, none of them were consulted before the changes were announced, but there is more to it than that. In its pursuit of conservation the NCC has sometimes upset the development plans of large-scale farmers and those, including the Forestry Commission, who want to cloak the mountainsides of Scotland and Wales with conifer plantations, laid out with military precision. In particular, in 1987 the NCC opposed the afforestation of the Flow Country, a large flat area of peat bog in Caithness and Sunderland, and

important breeding ground for some rare birds, greatly upsetting the forestry lobby made up of big landowners who were getting large tax incentives to cover the area with conifers.

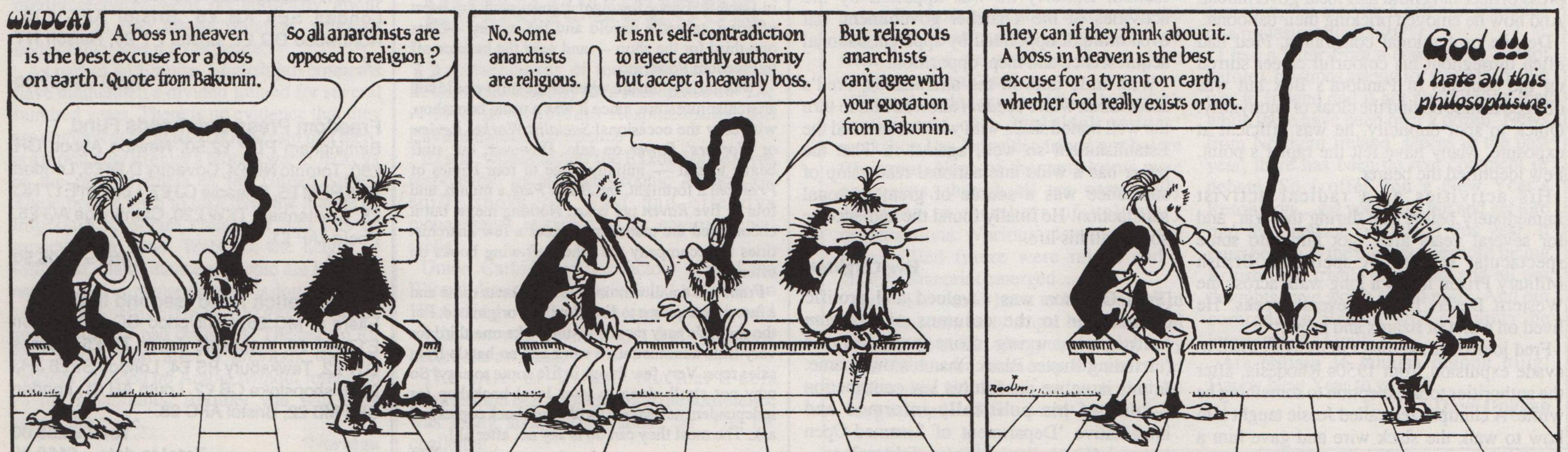
It is also true that the NCC in its Peterborough headquarters is seen by many Scots as a remote English bureaucracy that acted as though the whole countryside was just a scientific site, and was unable to appreciate rural reality and the local need to make a living from the land. The NCC has been particularly insensitive to the feelings of crofters and other small users of land of high conservation interest in Scotland. This produced just the opposition to the NCC as a whole which enabled the government, with the support of the anti-conservation lobby, to break it up and so please the Scottish landowning, farming and forestry interests as well as the local political establishment and hopefully to win back some of the support lost to the Nationalists.

The myth that these changes were intended to improve conservation was dispelled when a leaked Treasury document confirmed that they were merely for administrative convenience. Certainly many more administrators are being appointed and the new Scottish and Welsh bodies will be firmly under the control of the corresponding Secretaries of State, thus ensuring that the interests of large landowners, industrial farmers and blood sports enthusiasts are not interfered with. One of the NCC scientists was suspended last February for pointing out in an article in *The Guardian* how well these interests were represented on the governing council of the NCC at the expense of the conservationists. This has been achieved by packing it with pro-government appointees and not reappointing those opposed to NCC reorganisation, so ensuring that the ruling council supports the changes which are intended to take effect from April this year. Most of the staff are opposed but are another group who were not involved in the decision making.

Observing such manipulations an anarchist can do little, other than at a local level, but sit back and quietly wonder at it all. And, not least, wonder why the cost of advertising the new post of Chief Executive of the NCC for England costs £15,500, exclusive of VAT.

HS

There is still time to take advantage of our Annual Book Sale



Freedom has discovered a friend who works in the Government Secret Service Department which is responsible for intercepting and steaming open any suspect mail. He has undertaken to pass anything of interest to us.

Dear Mary,
A letter from your brother is a rare enough event, but I just had to write to somebody about the bind in which I find myself. The sad fact is, I've decided to chuck up social work because I no longer believe in it. That's a laugh, I know, looking back at three years of college and innumerable exams and practical experience in every sort of environment. You'll be all agog to know why, which is why I am writing to forestall long and expensive phone calls.

I've made up my mind and there is no argument, and I have come to some pretty drastic conclusions. You see, I blame it all on government attitudes and policies, and in particular on Thatcher with her public pious platitudes about the sanctity and goodness of family life. There is something calculated about the way in which most of the approved charities gang up behind the government

After wading through all the crap which has been plastered over the 'lower orders' — I'm sure Thatcher thinks like that — it seems to me that the government has paralysed people by hacking chunks off the social benefits system. This political administration has finally managed to totally isolate millions of people. A hell of a lot of people are left sitting around, waiting for something to happen, and they are not sure what it might be. Oh yes, there must be some spirit left somewhere if we are to believe that fourteen million people have not yet paid their poll tax. A lot of them must have been scared out of their wits when they recently learned that sheriff officers forcibly broke into the home of independent Labour MP Dick Douglas and started labelling his household goods to the value of £380. Douglas went independent when the Labour Party refused to take a firm stance on the poll tax issue. Another sign of the times.

You've got to hand it to the Tories, they have done a first class job in castrating real public opinion. Even the middle classes have now stopped recognising poverty for what it is. It is as though the whole country has gone over to a stop policy. People are not even wetting

Department of steamed-open letters

their lips in anticipation of a bare-fist fight at the next General Election. Real discontent has evaporated. I think this is because the radical Tories have lashed out at practically everything in sight, from social benefits to High Street shops, many of which are now at a virtual standstill. You've only got to sit around in any provincial shopping centre to realise that very few of the Bermuda-shorted dads and mums with their kids are not buying anything apart from the bare necessities.

So here we are, immobilised within a stagnating society. There is one other indication of how bad things really are. New vehicle registrations in July were 65,000 down against July 1989. The motor trade is at its lowest since 1987. Once upon a time it was the done thing to change the family car every couple of years. There are now more old bangers on the roads.

Being a social worker in this still and smelly pond ain't no fun any more, believe me. For one thing, you are constantly conscious that a crafty government is adept at massaging the statistics and any other figures which are helpful in social work. Only recently the fertility data was changed. Once upon a time child-bearing was measured up to the end of the child-bearing period. That has now gone by the board, although it is recognised that the population is dwindling. Quite a lot of people just don't bother to register a birth any more. Then there is the mobility factor. More people are leaving this country than the government cares to admit. They are going because they want something better than frequent kicks in the teeth. After 1992 a lot more will buzz off, I'm sure.

Frankly, I don't know where all this is leading. All I do know with any certainty is that I am leaving social work on anti-government grounds. I was talking to an economist the other day, and he gave me a quote which ran: "Development strategy should begin with autonomous rural evolution. No ministerial or administrative approach will be equal to this task." Guess who said that? An Egyptian, Ismail-Sabri

Abdalla, during a Third World conference years ago. It could apply to Britain in the future.

There must be ways in which strong village communities could, in effect, declare

independence, re-shape their own destinies and give Whitehall and party politics the cold shoulder within the limits of the law. In a word, a return to some of the better aspects of a medieval economy. It may mean isolation, but it could also mean survival and a means of building a better future.

Once I have cleared my desk here, I'll come and see you, and then we can talk more about it.

Yours
Brian

News from Angel Alley

Our book sale has had a good response from readers as well as callers at the bookshop. There is still time to send your orders (with cash please). We have enough catalogues remaining to send to our overseas readers and knowing how long it takes for surface mail outside Europe to reach its destination we are not putting a time limit on the offer but asking readers who want to take advantage of the sale discount to send their orders as soon as they receive this issue of *Freedom*. Dollar cheques cost us £1 to cash so please add that extra to your remittance.

Renewals of subscriptions are coming in at a steady rate — which keeps our book-keeper busy and happy because the bouquets dominate. The brickbats come from some of our old comrades who think *Freedom* ought to get rid of the geriatrics among the editors. We've passed on the bouquets which have been appreciated. The geriatrics response is: okay but where are the young to take over not for a month or two but for at least a year or two? Any offers?

We shall start with the next issue to send out our pink reminders to subscribers who received a green reminder in December and have not yet responded. Readers should by now know us well enough to appreciate that we are first of all propagandists. But we cannot survive (as does the extreme right wing organisation which subverts the word 'freedom' with large donations from industry and business) unless most of our readers pay their subscriptions more or less on time. We have a large free list to comrades who cannot afford to pay, to prisoners in this country and the US, and sample copies we send to enquirers or to the addressees of interesting letters to the press, etc. ... No subscriber to *Freedom* who can no longer afford to pay even the claimant's rate and who would like to go on

receiving our journal should not hesitate to explain his or her situation and will be put on our free list.

We have just received a consignment of Black Rose books which includes two new titles: *The Writer and Politics* by George Woodcock (260 pages, ISBN 0 921689 82 9, £9.95) and *The Life and Work of Karl Polanyi* edited by Karri Polanyi-Levitt (250 pages, ISBN 0 921689 80 2, £11.50).

Orders to Freedom Press with cash please and post free inland. Overseas please add 15%.

The hardback edition of *The Raven* volume 2 (nos 5-8) is now available with index, price £18 post free inland. Volume 1 is also available at the same price. Volume 3 (nos 9-12) will be ready shortly at the same price. These bound editions are limited to 200 copies. Single copies of all *The Raven* issues nos 1-12 are all available at £2.50 per copy. Special offer of nos 1-12 for £20 post free.

Number 13 of *The Raven* will be 'On Eastern Europe', dealing largely with the revival of anarchist groups in the 'liberated' countries of central Europe and of the Soviet Union based on a seminar held in Trieste last year at which a number of comrades from East Europe met comrades from the West and exchanged experiences in their respective countries. Not having been too successful in giving a date for publication of number 12, we can only say that we hope to bring out number 13 by the end of February, and we will keep readers informed of progress in a future News from Angel Alley.

We think we have personally acknowledged all subscriptions and donations but there is no harm in again thanking all those comrades and friends listed below who want to see *Freedom* and *The Raven* and Freedom Press continue their work of propagating ideas for an alternative, sane, humane society.

RIP Buster Black

Fred Oughton, alias Buster Black, alias, died from cancer on 10th December after a mercifully brief period of serious illness. He was only 67 and had been regularly contributing to the new format *Freedom* for just over a year in various guises. One of his last defiant gestures was a donation to the Fighting Fund [acknowledged in *Freedom* 12th January — Editors].

It was only in retirement through his *Freedom* articles that Fred was able to give full rein to the cynicism that had built up over the years of observing politicians at close range, both as a professional journalist and later as a press officer in central and local government. And how he enjoyed pricking their balloons.

Despite professional constraints, Fred had often throughout his colourful career stirred up the contents of Pandora's Box but was obliged to hide behind the cloak of anonymity. Quick to spot duplicity, he was efficient at exposure. Many have felt the rapier's point. Few identified the bearer.

His activities as a radical activist immediately before and during the War, and for several years after, got him into some spectacular scrapes. A spell in a British Military Prison led to a long walk across the Western Desert lasting several weeks. He lived on a diet of lizards and urine.

Fred joined a travelling circus as a clown to evade expulsion from 1950s Rhodesia, after the authorities took exception to something he wrote. A chimpanzee called Jessie taught him how to walk the slack wire and gave him a life-long rapport with animals. He said he

liked their consistent honesty. Buster is a black cat with plenty to say for himself.

Film publicist, script writer, writer of fiction and non-fiction, TV and radio presenter, mental nurse, mortuary assistant, bookshop manager, master woodcarver, civil servant, local government officer, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Freeman of the City of London. Fred Oughton liked variety, but despised pretence.

Like many of his generation he became progressively disillusioned with the formal system of government and felt very let down by the left in whose direction he naturally leaned. Latterly he was appalled by the activities of the Thatcher government, but even more disappointed by apparent national acquiescence and inept opposition.

With little faith in the alternatives, Fred's association with *Freedom* allowed him to turn the well honed skills with which he served the Establishment so well, against it. That the paper has a wide international readership of substance was a source of great personal satisfaction. He finally found the audience he sought all his life.

Eve Oughton

[Fred Oughton was a valued and prolific contributor to the columns of *Freedom* fortnightly, using more pseudonyms (including Buster Black) than his own name. In this issue we publish his last contribution — one of his politically informed and imaginative 'Department of Steamed-Open Letters'. We shall miss him — Editors]

Confessions of a Freedom Seller

I must admit, it took quite some time for me to pluck up the courage to go in and ask. I waited around nervously and suddenly blurted out to the manager, "Would you be interested in selling *Freedom*, the anarchist paper?" Yes! "What about *Black Flag*?" Yes! "The Raven?" Yes, no problems!

Christ! I never thought it was going to be that easy. So for over a year *Freedom*, etc., have been on sale in Cardiff. Every fortnight I go in with the latest offering, take the unsold and the money — less one-third for the shop — and send the balance off to Freedom Press, etc.

I was initially unsure whether the shop would sell anarchist literature, since it was a usual bookshop, with only the occasional *Socialist Worker Review* or *Workers' Power* on sale. However, our stuff began to sell — initially three to four copies of *Freedom* a fortnight, ten *Black Flag* a month, and four to five *Raven* per issue. Nothing mega, but it encouraged the manager to order a few anarchist titles to accompany the other left-wing books on offer.

From this small venture a few contacts came and a few subscriptions to *Freedom* also originated. For the shop it's easy money — they take one-third for very little administrative work and no hassle from sales reps. Very few things in life come so easy! So why not stroll along to your local bookshop (or independent newsagent) with some back copies and ask. The most they can do is say no, after all!

EM

DONATIONS

1st-12th January 1991

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund
Eltera FI MC £5, Lewes BM £4, London W8 PC £1, Stowmarket RP £2, Coventry DJN £5, Pontypridd GC £5, Cambridge JPH £6, Wareham MT £5, London E17 NC £5, Kamatura Japan JS £5, Lancaster SB £5, Zell RW £16, London SW18 AKB £1, Tewksbury PS £10, Hadleigh AH £5, London SE26 JHJ £5, Luton IAM £2, Bolton DP £2, Bishopstoke CB £5, Exmouth ABH £2, Poole JAP £5, Louth AH £4, Basingstoke JTB £1, York HF £2, London SE4 KB £5, Bristol AFC £15, Northwood DG £1, Bristol PT £6, Nelson NT £2.

Total = £137.00

Freedom Press Overheads Fund
Birmingham PDP £2.50, Newton Abbott GH £50, Toronto ND £4, Coventry DJN £5, London SE5 REM £5, Cheadle CJ £7, London E17 NC £5, Cheltenham TKW £20, Cambridge AG £6, Poole JAP £1.

Total = £105.50

Raven Deficit Fund (second list)
Eltera FI MC £5, Pontypridd GC £2, London E17 NC £5, Kamakura Japan TS £5, Nantes GW £2, Tewksbury PS £4, London SE26 JHJ £2, Bishopstoke CB £2, Louth AH £1, London SE4 MB £2, Bristol AFC £8.

Total = £38.00

Total to date = £168.00

Purpose in Life

Despite the challenge from a recently revived fundamentalist backlash, evolution theory is widely acknowledged to be sound. Whether we are happy with it or not, we must accept the probability that humans and other animals share a common ancestry. Either way, the one thing not in any doubt is that our basic needs are one and the same.

Yet, in the face of predation by other species, including their greatest enemy, Homo Sapiens, animals have been remarkably successful in surviving. It is therefore important to ask, at this stage, when humans are, seemingly, ready to commit nuclear specicide, where it is that we have been going wrong. What is it that we do and animals do not do?

We like to class ourselves above other animals on the basis of our inventiveness, accumulation of knowledge, capabilities for planning for the future and abstract thought. This is all well and good but for the fact that our application of those faculties seems to be leading us to the brink of disaster. Now, we need only take the briefest look at animal behaviour to notice that the female and her offspring take a position of central importance. In the world of animals, the young are everything and patriarchy is notable for its absence. It is a rape-free world where the wishes of adult females are respected, and young females protected.

It would seem that human males have, for some reason, decided females should be subordinate to their desires, and that, to that end, they have devised sets of rules, laid down in the Bibles of the various religions, the better to bring females into subjection with minimal use of force.

Not surprisingly, if men are conditioned to dominate women, they will also exhibit a tendency to dominate one another, individually and collectively. Thus, in addition to patriarchy, we witness the phenomenon of nationalism, and centralising of power in governments and bureaucracies. Our animal instincts have been subordinated to a lust for power buttressed by an appeal to romantic, i.e. false, ideas.

The human male has made history, recorded it, analysed it and seems hell-bent on confining himself to it in the very near future if he fails to learn the lesson from his relatives, the animals. Philosophy, from Aristotle to Ayer, is an account of male ideas expounded by males whose life-styles have been so remote from the basics that the simple answer eluded them.

Perhaps, like the animals, we would do better if we trusted our instincts rather than follow the fanciful notions put forward by men whose vested interests in what they propose are not difficult to discern. If we are looking for a purpose in life, we need to look no further than the animals, who know instinctively that it is the continuation of the

species. Logically, there cannot be any other purpose in life more important than life itself; quality of life is of the utmost importance, but there can be no quality of life in the absence of life itself.

Alarming, most of the world religions, such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, are primarily concerned with another 'life' which is supposed to occur after the demise of the individual. Clearly, these religions are preaching nothing more or less than a purpose in death. A person's behaviour in 'this life' is of less consequence than that person's acceptance, or rejection, of a particular religion. The life of these religious people is geared to, and anticipates, a more important existence 'beyond the grave' and behaviour consequent upon such belief often results in the premature attainment of that goal.

Thus far, it has been argued that purpose in life has to be the continuation of the species, that animals recognise this by instinct, and that most religions are a barrier to the realisation of that self-evident fact — for the reason that they are the invention of power-motivated males. It is now pertinent to suggest a reason why females are better adapted to bring real purpose to our lives.

Women, being of necessity thoroughly involved in the process of conception, birth and nurture of children, enjoy a stronger bond between one another as well as with their offspring. In this respect, at least, it is no insult to say that they are more animal-like than men. That full involvement with the basics of life means that they have less time, or inclination, to spend in self-indulgence or in the pursuit of romantic satisfaction. On the

contrary, the experience of childbirth and consequent labours must inevitably produce a more practical, down-to-earth outlook on life. Most women experience genuine love, given and taken, as opposed to the romantic, sexually inspired and often selfish conception of 'love' that is the illusion experienced by so many males. Penetrative sex, for women, does not take on the all-important role ascribed to it by men generally; important though it may be, it is not so much an end in itself. That male animals appear to be much more successful in appreciating this, and coming to terms with it, is evidenced by their courteous behaviour towards unresponsive females.

It is almost unknown for primates, other than humans, to fight within the species unless they are in captivity or artificially overcrowded conditions. Monkey business would seem to be a trait of the human male rather than his inferior cousin. The frighteningly powerful Silverback Gorilla is a sheer delight to watch as he plays tenderly with his hairy young. A terrible injustice is done to the Apes when average human behaviour is described as beastly. Admittedly, overcrowding has much to do with some of the worst examples of human behaviour, but this is often the result of governmental and religious exhortations to 'increase and multiply' for the purposes of outnumbering the enemy, or increasing the power of priests. It is no coincidence that both governments and religions are controlled by men.

The average woman has a purpose that is overwhelmingly satisfying and readily obtainable — having a baby. For her, purpose in life is not in doubt, and should mean joy and happiness if her mate could accept his ancillary role in that process. More joy should follow when the children have grown up, in the shape of grandsons and granddaughters. That is truly the life process; the fulfilment of life's purpose.

Despite Freud, the wombless male might well have feelings of envy or inferiority at the magic performed by the female. The possibility that he invents gods in his own image, as an alternative form of magic, should not be discounted. Sexually available at all times, he might feel unwanted when his mate is exclusively engaged in the process of childbirth. The man who does not enjoy the wonder of parenthood and the work that goes with it, is likely to be into some mischief such as the sexual pursuit of other females or a search for alternatives like gambling, alcohol or the 'larger than life' world of religions, ideologies and the occult. The bloody pages of history are a testimony to the tragic results of male flights into romanticism. The female has much more useful commitments.

To summarise, we need look no further than the behaviour of animals for the real purpose of our lives, which quite simply has to be the continuation of the human race. Almost all of the great religions are concerned, primarily, with a purpose in death. Women, being more closely involved in the life cycle, are better placed to decide our direction than men. Everything we do should take due account of the well-being of the Mother and Child. When the male becomes dissatisfied with his ancillary role in domestic affairs, he is a potential threat to the human race.

Ernie Crosswell

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In the latest flexing of muscles by the British war machine, the call-up of army and navy reservists with 'specialist skills' (of which only medical have been mentioned so far) if they decline to volunteer, is certain to be extended to general conscription in any prolonged and bloody conflict. If this happens all possible support must be given to those who refuse to join up. Watch out, it could include you.

But while military and civilian hospitals throughout the country are being prepared to receive large numbers of Gulf war casualties the health workers union COHSE points out

(BBC Radio 4, 4th January 1991) that the NHS hasn't even got the money or facilities to cope with its normal civilian workload: many patients have to wait two years or more for a simple operation. And the Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons added, in a letter to the national press last week that the maximum number of serious burns injuries that could be coped with at any one time by all the hospitals in the UK, due to the special facilities needed, is 150. They say that just one plane-load of such casualties would swamp the entire system. No doubt the Ministry of 'Defence' is planning to dragoon some of Britain's more reluctant European partners in the Gulf enterprise into accepting some of the others. The rest will presumably be left to die in the Middle East sands, to be flown home later in body-bags.

American servicemen continue to die in the phoney war. Another seventeen sailors lost their lives when their supply boat capsized off the coast of Israel in December. This brings the total to 63 by my reckoning, one of whom is said to have committed suicide over the combined tension and boredom in the Saudi desert. A British reservist has also died whilst on a training exercise at Aldershot, prior to being flown to the Gulf. He last served in the army ten years ago.

Meanwhile, the influence of *Freedom* is growing, as it now seems to be read by the staff of certain national newspapers. Following the request in these pages for an estimate of the time it would take for all the American troops in the Gulf to die from accidents, etc., even without a war, *The Guardian* 'Diary' column (13th November 1990) has calculated that at the current rate they will all be dead by 10th February 2040. Many from old age, probably. Unfortunately, the Iraqi people are unlikely to survive a blockade lasting that long, either.

The Department of Health has already said that all necessary funds will be found to meet the bill for war-wounded — and presumably added to the £430 million cost of the British share of the crisis so far. So why hasn't the money been found to treat all those people already on hospital waiting lists, or who are

sent home early because beds are needed for more urgent cases, only to die a few days later or be re-admitted with complications?

There are two answers to this question: firstly because, unfortunately, unlike a vast macho military operation to slap Saddam Hussein's face — and save Bush's — the health of millions of ordinary people in Britain (who've never invaded another country in their lives) does not help to maintain the strategic interests of the USA: oil supplies, military bases, client states and trade supremacy. And secondly, because the money is not really there to be found but is borrowed from a contingency fund which will be replaced at the first opportunity by extorting more from us in the form of higher taxes and/or more public spending cuts, whether or not there is an actual war.

My advice is: get ill and book your hospital bed now, while stocks last.

Florence Night-in-Gale

Liberate the dustbin!

So, who will empty the dustbins in the Sanarchist society? Well ... frankly, nobody! Why should we?

What then has happened to mutual aid and co-operation? Nothing really. They are alive and well.

Dustbins are the ultimate symbol of capitalism — the throwaway society, the wasteful society, the uncaring, destructive, dirty society.

Nobody will empty those dirty, smelly bins anymore because they won't need emptying anymore. Take a look in your dustbin. It is most probably full of packaging. How much is essential to the product? Virtually none! The logic of capitalism demands branding to justify inflated prices, this demands packaging. Packaging is also heavy — the more packaging, the less product, the more profit! The old excuse of packaging being needed to inform the customer doesn't really stand up when you consider most information seems to be designed more to confuse rather than inform. Useful information would usually fit on a postage stamp. And anyway, this hardly justifies the other three layers of shiny paper or plastic.

Add to this the fact that the packaging industry reaps massive profits and you begin to smell something foul in your dustbin.

Anarchism has always stood for 'production for need not greed' and for mutual aid. All those workers in the aforementioned industries can look forward to the leisure society and participation in more beneficial work. Theirs, along with many other jobs, will not be needed anymore, or at least certainly not on anything like the scale they currently are.

With the mentality of capitalism gone, product information can become truly informative on the minimum of packaging, which will invariably be recycled and recyclable. Why? Mutual aid. There is no logic to throwing useful items away, when it is easier to recycle them than produce more fresh ones. It also makes ecological sense, of course! We can look forward to the reappearance of the returnable bottle and jar, automated recycling units (one of the reasons recycling is so backward currently is the cost of the automation required for it. A case of 'to hell with the planet, what about the profits!'), no dirty great landfills, recycled products, household wastes being composted and no damn great bin to trip over when returning home late at night.

Forward to anarchy! Liberate the bin!

AG

MEETINGS

ACF Dayschool

Saturday
2nd February 1991

Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, London WC1
(Holborn tube)

Timetable

- 10.00 - 10.30 : Registration
 10.30 - 10.45 : Introduction
 10.45 - 12.30 : Eastern Europe — an analysis of the current situation including the economic crisis, 'new' governments, pro-capitalism, and history from 1917.
 12.30 - 1.30 : Lunch
 1.30 - 3.00 : Anarchist Communism — the history of anarchist communism, its ideas and their relation to Marxism, role of the revolutionary organisation, and anarchist communism in practice today.
OR Poll Tax — examination of events so far, demos and riots, the Federation and independent initiatives.
 3.00 - 3.15 : Tea break

FREEDOM fortnightly

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3.15 - 5.00 : Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism — what is the relationship between anti-imperialism, nationalism and libertarian communism. Discussion around Iraq and Ireland.

Cost: £3 waged / £2 unwaged

Lunch and refreshments will be provided

Please try to book in advance and also send details of creche facilities needed or any other special requirements to:

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Anarchist Forum

Fridays at about 8pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square (via Cosmo Street off Southampton Row), London WC1.

- 1st February - 'Anarchism and the Egoism of Max Stirner' (speaker S.E. Parker)
 8th February - General discussion
 15th February - 'The Thatcherite Phenomena and After: Anarchist Alternatives?' (Speaker Peter Neville)
 22nd February - 'Building the Anarchist City' (speaker Andrew Lainton)
 1st March - General discussion
 8th March - 'Anarcho-Pacifism' (speaker Marten Low)
 15th March - General discussion
 22nd March - 'Anarchism in Spain: The '90s' (speaker J.M. Alventosa Ferri)
 19th April - 'Anarchism and the National Curriculum' (speaker Chris Draper)
 26th April - General discussion
 3rd May - 'Race: The Problem for Libertarians' (speaker Peter Neville)
 10th May - General discussion

Volunteer speakers or discussion group leaders are wanted for the 'To be arranged' and 'Discussion group' slots as above and from 17th May to 31st May 1991 — all at 8pm to 10pm. We hope to continue the meetings from 7th June to 14th July 1991 either at the same time or at the earlier time of 6pm to 8pm (however, if we are the only group using the

Centre the staff may wish to close at 8pm). Anyone interested in leading a discussion to contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW.

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